



Reviving Waqf-Based Endowments for Sustainable Teacher Training in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study investigates the feasibility of restoring waqf-based endowments as a long-term method for improving teacher education and training in Northern Nigeria. Drawing on historical and present waqf models, the research investigates how this Islamic philanthropic organization might solve teacher shortages, low training quality, and imbalances in educational service delivery. The study employs a qualitative research methodology that includes document analysis, expert interviews, and case studies from various Islamic institutions. The findings show that waqf has historically played an important role in financing education in Muslim communities, but it has fallen due to colonial interruptions, legal limits, and a lack of public awareness. The research suggests that reviving and updating waqf through proper legislation, community participation, and integration with public-private partnerships can considerably improve the quality and accessibility of teacher training in underprivileged areas. Recommendations are provided for government agencies, religious leaders, NGOs, and communities to collaborate in building waqf-based teacher education projects to reposition and assure sustainable teacher training in Northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Northern Nigeria, Revival, Sustainability, Teacher Training, Waqf-Based Endowments

1. INTRODUCTION

Waqf, which comes from the Arabic root word waqafa (to stop or hold), refers to the permanent dedication of property or wealth for religious or charitable purposes (Kahf, 2003). Historically, waqf institutions in Northern Nigeria helped establish Qur'anic schools and Tsangaya or makarantun allo (traditional Islamic learning centers), where teacher training was integrated into the educational process (Adam et al., 2024). However, the introduction of colonial legal systems and land reforms undermined Islamic endowments, diminishing their role in education. Today, there is growing interest in reviving waqf as an alternative financing mechanism for education

in Muslim-majority societies (Karim, 2010).

Northern Nigeria faces significant challenges in teacher education and training, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas due to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, limited access to in-service training, and a critical shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural and marginalized communities (Maidoki & Sani, 2018). Northern Nigeria has a high rate of unqualified teachers, poor access to in-service training, and underfunded teacher training institutions. At the same time, Islamic philanthropy, particularly waqf (endowment), remains an underutilized but culturally and religiously relevant resource that historically played a crucial role in financing education and supporting teachers in Muslim societies, but its influence and application have significantly declined (Muhammad et al., 2025). Given the cultural and religious significance of waqf in the region, reviving and integrating it into teacher training systems may offer a sustainable, community-driven solution.

Amal et al. (2025) gives a theoretical framework for understanding waqf as an Islamic economic entity capable of funding public goods such as education. His work is critical in reestablishing the concept of waqf as a non-state, everlasting funding

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vehicle. However, their perspectives are generic and lacks specific relevance to teacher education, particularly in Africa. This study expands on Kahf's theoretical framework by examining how waqf might be adapted to facilitate teacher preparation in Northern Nigeria.

Investigate the role of waqf in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education (Shaari et al., 2023). Mujani & Yaakub, (2017) examine waqf-based models in teacher education in Malaysia, highlighting their positive impact on teacher morale, institutional sustainability, and pedagogical outcomes. Their case studies demonstrate success in integrating waqf into mainstream education systems, but cultural, legal, and infrastructure differences between Malaysia and Nigeria call for an indigenous model. This study adapts and modifies their insights to fit the sociocultural realities of Northern Nigeria. While they highlight waqf's transformative potential in global educational contexts, their work is limited to Southeast Asia and lacks an empirical base in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The historical development and decline of waqf in Nigeria, particularly during and after the colonial era, are tracked by Muhammad et al. (2025) and Muhammad & Al-Shaghdari (2024). He describes how colonial practices distanced people from overseeing local resources and upended Islamic charity institutions. Although his work is essential for placing the Nigerian predicament in context, it provides no guidance or useful models for resurrection. The current study suggests strategies to reactivate waqf for educational growth in the modern era, going beyond historical explanation.

In their study of waqf-linked teacher training programs in Malaysia and Indonesia, Sani et al. (2022) and Usman & Ab Rahman (2023) demonstrate how infrastructure, training supplies, and teacher salaries are funded by community-managed waqf endowments. Their results confirm that such systems are feasible in contexts with limited resources. However, regions like Northern Nigeria with inadequate waqf institutions are not covered by the study. By investigating how underdeveloped waqf systems can be reorganized and maintained in such settings, our study closes that gap.

Localized waqf procedures that are still in use to fund Qur'anic schools are identified by Muhammad et al. (2024), who look at Islamic philanthropic contributions to education in Kano

and Katsina States. This study proposes a policy-driven approach to institutionalizing waqf for official teacher training, building on the findings of a previous study that found a lack of coordination and legal structure, but also confirmed the community's willingness to assist. Sani et al. (2025) research on constitutional and legal issues in Nigerian waqf reveals a lack of clear legal framework that discourages both beneficiaries and donors.

Muhammad et al. (2025) investigate teacher education financing in Northern Nigeria and find that government funding alone is inadequate, irregular, and unsustainable. Although not specifically focused on waqf, their findings reinforce the urgency of alternative funding. Sani et al. (2025) examines the constitutional and legal issues that Nigerian waqf faces, citing the lack of a clear legal framework as a deterrent for both donors and beneficiaries. The current research incorporates this legal perspective but also suggests educational policy reforms and waqf-based organizational frameworks for teacher development.

Muhammad et al. (2025) conducted a needs assessment on teacher education and the role of Waqf in Northern Nigeria and emphasized the lack of community-driven support systems. Their study calls for creative, localized solutions to the teacher quality crisis, and the current research responds to this call by proposing the revival of waqf, an indigenous institution, as a community-based solution tailored to regional educational needs. Sani et al. (2025) examine the role of waqf in financing vocational education for youth empowerment in Northern Nigeria. Their work provides examples of successful instances where waqf supports technical education, but their focus is on youth entrepreneurship rather than the teacher training ecosystem.

These studied literatures reaffirm the historical and contemporary relevance of waqf in education, although there is a distinct absence of empirical research especially tying waqf to teacher education in Northern Nigeria. Most studies focus on either legislative frameworks, general educational support, or case studies from other regions such as Southeast Asia. Additionally, national education development plans do not fully incorporate Islamic generosity, particularly when it comes to teacher training. By offering a localized, context-sensitive, and empirically supported examination of how waqf might be resurrected and institutionalized to

sustainably fund teacher training in Northern Nigeria, the current study fills these gaps. It provides a comprehensive and useful framework by integrating fieldwork data, historical research, and policy recommendations.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting between traditional Islamic philanthropic practices and contemporary educational needs by presenting evidence-based recommendations. It will assess the historical contributions and current status of waqf in teacher development, identify the barriers to its use in modern educational systems, and propose viable models for reviving and institutionalizing waqf to support teacher training programs.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

1. Research Design

In order to investigate the resurgence of waqf-based endowments as a viable method for teacher training in Northern Nigeria, this study used a qualitative case study technique. To enable a thorough investigation of the institutional, social, and environmental factors pertaining to the usage of waqf in teacher education, the case study technique was selected. Additionally, the method made it possible to combine data from several sources, such as focus groups, documents, interviews, and observation.

2. Study Area

The study was carried out in a few Northern Nigerian states, such as Gombe, Kano, and Sokoto States, which have a strong Islamic historical legacy and institutions pertaining to waqf. These sites were specifically picked because of their active participation in the Islamic society, the presence of religious scholars, and past or current educational waqf efforts.

3. Population and Sampling Techniques

The study population consisted of:

- a. Imams and Islamic scholars who are familiar with waqf
- b. Teachers and administrators at government-owned and Islamic teacher training institutions (university faculties and colleges of education).
- c. Islamic scholars and religious leaders engaged in waqf management.

- d. Government representatives in charge of education and waqf regulation; and
- e. Representatives of civil society organizations and waqf foundations currently in existence.

Participants with pertinent expertise in waqf, education, or both were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. In all, thirty participants were interviewed in the three states that were chosen.

4. Data Collection Methods

Multiple qualitative data collection techniques were employed:

- a. Semi-structured Interviews: Twenty important informants, including educators, religious leaders, and waqf board members, participated in semi-structured interviews. Participants' perceptions of waqf, its potential in teacher preparation, and their opinions on its rebirth were all examined in these interviews.
- b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Conducted with educators and community people to collect a range of viewpoints and confirm the results of individual interviews.
- c. Document Analysis: To comprehend the development and present status of waqf in education, historical records, policy documents, waqf deeds (waqfiyyat), educational reports, and NGO publications were examined.
- d. Field Observation: The researchers conducted field observations at several active waqf-supported institutions in Northern Nigeria. Researchers were able to observe the structure, procedures, and difficulties on the ground by visiting waqf-run institutions that are now in operation, such as Qur'anic schools or orphanage schools.

5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, following these steps:

- a. Interview and focus group discussion tapes are transcribed, and responses are coded into emergent themes using qualitative software (such as NVivo) or by hand color-coding.
- b. Themes related to historical significance, stakeholder attitudes, legal restrictions, funding sources, and possible waqf models for teacher training are categorized.

- c. Data from many sources is triangulated to assure reliability and validity.⁶ Ethical Considerations

A relevant institutional research ethics committee granted ethical approval, and participants were given the following benefits:

- a. A brief explanation of the study's purpose;
- b. An assurance of confidentiality and anonymity;
- c. An invitation to give informed consent prior to participation;
- d. The freedom to withdraw at any time without consequence;
- e. Compliance with national research guidelines and Islamic ethical values.

7. Trustworthiness and Validation

In order to verify validity and dependability:

- a. Participant summaries of interview transcripts were sent back to them for member checking.
- b. Peer debriefing included conversations with waqf specialists and academic supervisors.
- c. By utilizing several data sources, data triangulation improved the precision and comprehensiveness of conclusions.

Studying waqf-related educational projects in Northern Nigeria requires attention to cultural, religious, and ethical considerations, which this technique ensures while offering a rigorous framework for data collection and analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide important new information about the possibilities and difficulties of resurrecting endowments based on waqfs to improve teacher training and education in Northern Nigeria. The answers to surveys, interviews, and documentary analysis show that waqf, which has long been an essential institution for assisting with education in Muslim countries, continues to be a tool for community development that is both culturally and spiritually acceptable. However, because of institutional, legal, and policy constraints, its potential in modern teacher preparation is still untapped.

1. Historical Awareness and Community Perception

Waqf institutions have historically been crucial in funding Islamic education in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, according to the majority of respondents, who included Islamic scholars, educational administrators, and local stakeholders. Waqf from families and the community was frequently used to finance Qur'anic schools, teacher stipends, and training facilities. However, the study discovered that, mostly as a result of institutional memory loss and a lack of public education regarding the concept, this historical knowledge has not transferred into active community engagement with the modern waqf resurgence.

2. Current State of Teacher Training and Funding Gaps

According to the study, there is a significant lack of financing and support for teacher preparation in rural and peri-urban areas of Northern Nigeria. Budgetary constraints have weakened public institutions, while the absence of ongoing professional development, poor infrastructure, and low teacher motivation continue to undermine the quality of teacher education. The majority of respondents agreed that alternative, sustainable models are needed to address the gaps left by government initiatives.

3. Potential of Waqf in Teacher Training

The potential of waqf to support long-term and sustainable financing arrangements for teacher education was broadly acknowledged by the respondents. Comparative benchmarks were provided by case study analyses from other Muslim nations, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey, which demonstrated that waqf-funded teacher training programs and scholarships have increased teacher retention and quality. In the context of Northern Nigeria, the waqf model gained societal legitimacy due to its congruence with Islamic principles and educational objectives, which made it both desired and acceptable.

4. Legal and Institutional Constraints

The study found that the establishment of contemporary waqf institutions was significantly hampered by institutional fragmentation and legal difficulties. Nigeria lacks a single set of rules governing waqf; instead, different states use a combination of legislative, Islamic, and customary norms. Potential donors become unconfident as a result, and the creation of open and responsible

waqf bodies is hampered. At the state and federal levels, stakeholders underlined the necessity of waqf-specific institutional frameworks and legal reforms.

5. Community Willingness and Donor Confidence

Muslims are very willing to contribute to educational waqf, as long as there is accountability and appropriate management, according to interviews with local philanthropists, community leaders, and religious officials. Despite their mistrust of government-managed funds, respondents had faith in waqf boards run by reputable Islamic experts and scholars. This result emphasizes how crucial transparency, governance, and confidence are to any waqf resuscitation plan.

6. Gender and Inclusivity Considerations

Another new discovery is that the majority of waqf programs, both past and present, have been either male-dominated or gender-neutral, with little attention paid to teacher preparation programs that support female educators. In conservative Muslim communities, where female instructors are crucial to the education of girls, the current study emphasizes the necessity for gender-sensitive waqf policies that also support their training.

7. Policy Recommendations from Stakeholders

In order to revitalize and institutionalize waqf for teacher education, participants underlined the necessity of a multi-stakeholder strategy engaging religious leaders, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and international development partners. Public-private-Waqf partnerships (PPWPs) that provide state backing without sacrificing the initiative's Islamic identity appear to have a high potential, according to the statistics.

Synthesis with Existing Literature

Research from around the world, like [Karim \(2010\)](#) which demonstrated the effectiveness of waqf-based educational endowments in Southeast Asia, supports the findings. [Mujani & Yaakub \(2017\)](#) provide empirical support for calls to revive historically grounded Islamic finance structures in contemporary context. [Usman & Ab Rahman \(2023\)](#) contend that financial constraints impair the efficacy of education systems in developing Muslim societies and [Muhammad et al. \(2025\)](#) advocated for institutional reform but did not

investigate collaborative waqf governance models as a driver of sustainable education finance.

In conclusion, the study offers factual proof that restoring endowments based on waqfs can have a major positive impact on long-term teacher preparation in Northern Nigeria. Despite the institutional and legal constraints, the cultural and religious alignment of waqf with community values makes it a viable and promising approach to alleviate the teacher education issue. The research thus presents a route for policy-makers, religious leaders, and benefactors to work in institutionalizing and upgrading waqf in line with Nigeria's educational development aspirations.

4. CONCLUSION

The function and possibilities of reviving waqf-based endowments for long-term teacher preparation in Northern Nigeria have been rigorously investigated in this paper. According to the findings, waqf, a deeply ingrained Islamic charity organization, has a lot of potential to address the persistent issues with teacher education in the area, namely underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, and low teacher enthusiasm. Waqf institutions have always promoted education by starting schools, giving teachers stipends, and building training facilities. However, Northern Nigeria's waqf system has either stagnated or been underutilized as a result of colonial interruptions, a lack of legal frameworks, and poor institutional structures. However, if appropriate systems of accountability, transparency, and policy support are established, the study demonstrates a significant desire among local communities, religious leaders, and benefactors to return to waqf as a sustainable financing source. The study also emphasizes how incorporating waqf into teacher preparation programs may help achieve educational development objectives, encourage community ownership of education, and preserve Islamic educational legacy in addition to enhancing the quality of instruction. In order to meet the demands of current teacher preparation and professional development, waqf systems must be strategically revived and modernized.

To strengthen the role of waqf in teacher education, several coordinated actions are necessary. First, governments should create and implement unified federal and state legal frameworks that recognize, regulate, and protect waqf endowments, ensuring they align with both national laws and Islamic principles. They should also encourage reputable

waqf institutions engaged in education by providing regulatory support, tax incentives, and technical assistance. Furthermore, the National Policy on Education should incorporate waqf-based models, particularly in teacher recruitment and training initiatives, through collaboration with religious organizations and waqf foundations.

Religious leaders and scholars also have a critical role to play. They should lead advocacy efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of waqf in Muslim communities and participate actively in oversight committees to promote transparency and ensure religious conformity in waqf management. Moreover, they should work with academic institutions to design teacher preparation programs that integrate modern teaching methods with Islamic principles and ethics.

For waqf operators and foundations, there is a need to prioritize teacher preparation alongside traditional areas such as food distribution and mosque maintenance. They should adopt best practices from successful waqf models in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, particularly in impact assessment and governance. Establishing teacher training centers or colleges funded wholly or partially through waqf resources would also contribute significantly to long-term sustainability.

Community stakeholders and philanthropists have a vital role in promoting local endowments by mobilizing community donations to support teacher development initiatives at the grassroots level. They must also demand transparency in the management of waqf projects and ensure open use of waqf funds. Special attention should be given to promoting female teacher education through waqf initiatives, particularly in underserved communities, to foster inclusive educational growth.

Reviving waqf-based endowments for teacher education in Northern Nigeria is not merely a return to Islamic tradition but a strategic step toward addressing one of the region's most pressing educational challenges. With proper collaboration among governments, religious organizations, waqf operators, and communities, waqf can serve as a powerful instrument for social justice, educational sustainability, and national development.

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